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SUBJECT: Ugandan Response on Mobilizing Pressure on Iran

REF: STATE 9124; 09 KAMPALA 492

DERIVED FROM: DSCG 05-1 B, D

¶1. (C) Deputy Chief of Mission delivered reftel demarche on January 29 to Ugandan State Minister of Foreign Affairs Henry Okello Oryem. Oryem responded by saying Uganda has been firm in insisting that Iran should only use nuclear power for peaceful purposes, and indicated an openness to additional measures that would increase pressure on Iran. He recommended that the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations meet with her Ugandan counterpart to discuss this further.

¶2. (C) Reftel demarche was well-timed, as Uganda was hosting the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States in Kampala the same week. With this conference came rumors that Ari Lirijani, Iran's Speaker of Parliament, would be in town lobbying for support for the Iranian nuclear program. A Ugandan Member of Parliament confirmed Lirijani's attendance at the OIC event, but Oryem seemed unaware of his presence. Further, the local press reported on February 2 that Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni had met with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad during the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa the previous day. The same report said Museveni had invited Ahmadinejad to visit Uganda in 2010 as follow up to Museveni's visit to Tehran last year (ref B).

¶3. (C) Comment: Despite Oryem's encouraging words, we don't expect Uganda to lead the charge in applying greater pressure on Iran, the strength of our argument notwithstanding. As noted in ref B, Uganda sees itself, perhaps misguidedly, as being best served by a "balanced" foreign policy that attempts to cultivate strong relations with countries as diverse as the U.S. and the UK on one hand, and countries like Iran and North Korea on the other. End comment.

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